THE MINISTER OF WATER RE SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SUR FACE TRANSPORT (SHRI MANU BHAI KOTADIA): (a) There is no pro posal to set up Ship-building Yards at Tuticorin Port.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Starting speed-post service to Nagarcoil in Kanyakumari district

724. SHRI M. VINCENT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a great need for starting Speed-Post service to Nagercoil, an important trade and business centre in Kanyakumari District; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to start this service as a priority basis?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAI PAR-KASH): (a) No, Sir, there is no traffic potential at Nagarcoil for introduction speed post service in the city.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Trade amongst SAARC Countries

725. SHRl VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the study conducted by the Research and Information System for the Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries (RIS), which appeared in 'Business and Political Observer' of 6th December, 1990, especially on th; observation that expansion of trade among SAARC countries has more profound economic basis than achievement of regional self-reliance;

(b) whether it is a fact that unit values realised by SAARC countries in their exports to regional countries are higher than those to the rest of the World, especially for goods where freight cost is significant;

(c) if so, whether Government would consider the proposal of providing special measures for Intra-SAARC trade in con-sultation with other countries to substantially increase Intra-SAARC trade accounts from the present level of a mere 2. 5 per cent of the total trade of these countries; and

(d) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUK-LA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This is one of the conclusions of the RIS study.

(c) The Government is prepared to con-sider any proposal for special measures for substantially expanding intra-SAARC trade.

(d) Does not arise.

Steps to maintain peace in the sub-continent

726. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be) pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has expressed his willingness to adopt measures to change the present situation in the' Sub-Continent and also to bring about confidence and trust in the region;

(b) whether the Prime Minister during his visit to Mate; had a talk with the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh;

(c) if so, the outcome of lie talks; and

(d) what further steps are contemplated maintain peace[1] in the region?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AF-FAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA1; (a) At the Opening Session of the SAARC Summit on 21 November

1990, Prime Minister said cooperation among countries of the region should be forged in a manner that serves the best interests of all the countries involved and that the precise way in which we achieve this will be a test of our organisational capabilities. At the concluding Session of the Summit, Prime Minister remarked that the unison of thought, concern, desire and confidence for bringing peace amongst SAARC countries is what will inspire and strengthen our future course. PM said that at the next SAARC Summit it will be possible to give a message of mutual goodwill and a cooperation, love and affection, and brotherhood to the whole world.

(b) and (c). During their meeting in Male on 22 November 1990, the Prime (Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed that all differences, should be resolved peacefully and through dialogue. It was also agreed that the Third Round of Foreign Secretary level talks would take place in Islamabad. Prime Minister Chandra Seldhar reiterated India's position on the question of Pakistan's intereference in our internal affairs. The Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan agreed to remain in touch with each other.

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan have since met in Islamabad from Decfjnber 17—20, 1990. In order to carry the bilateral dialogue forward and also to reduce the tension in our bilateral relationship, it was agreed to resume discusions ove(r a wide range of bilateral issues.

During his meeting with the president of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Chandra Sekhar expressed his willingness to extend all possible cooperation t_0 Bangladesh and hope that the two countries would have the best of relations. Since then following the resignation of President Ershad, Goveinment have welcomed the movement towards restoration of democracy in Bangladesh and look forward to working closely -with a democratically elected Government in Bangladesh.

(d) Government continue to accord high priority to strengthening our relations with neighbouring countries and will follow a dynamic policy of interaction with leaders of countries in South Asia.

Improving the Indo-Pak relations

727. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has recently held discussions with the Prime Minister of Pakistan at Mais to take fresh measures to minimise tension between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions field: and

(c) what fresh measures have been taken/proposed to be taken to minimise tension between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. The Prime Minister of India and Pakistan met in the Maldives on 22nd November, 1990. It was agffeed that all differences would be resolved peacefully and through dialogue, and that the Third Round of Foreign Secretary level talks would take place* in Islamabad from 18—20 December, 1990 when dates for the next meeting of tlhei Joint Commission, and for the continuation of discussions on Tiilbal Project and Sir Creek would be determined. The two Prime Ministers agreed to remain in touch with each other.

(c) Pursuant to the' meeting of the Prime Minister of India *and* Pakistan, the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries met in Islamabad from 18—20 December 1990 and, among others, agreed to the following measures designed to reduce tension between the) two countries:

— The talks on the boundary in the Sir Creek area will be resumed in early February, 1991;